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State Fire Marshal

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Minnesota Fire Department Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor/Dryer Award Program 2020 Program Year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

Introduction:

Despite being more physically fit and healthier than the general population firefighters, both career and volunteer/paid-on-call, experience cancer at a higher rates than those in the communities they serve. Studies continue to show that firefighters are acutely exposed to known carcinogens during structure and other fires and are continually exposed via turnout gear that is soiled due to exposure to toxic combustion byproducts.

In recent years, fire departments across Minnesota have implemented turnout gear decontamination procedures post fire events to help reduce firefighter exposure to toxic combustion byproducts. At the same time mechanical turnout gear washers/extractors have been introduced as an effective and efficient means by which firefighters can best clean their soiled turnout gear and greatly reduce their exposure to combustion byproducts.

Many fire departments, however, have found commercial turnout gear washer/extractors, which can cost upwards of \$10,000, to be cost prohibitive. Therefore, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, with funding from the Fire Safety Account, through the State Fire Marshal Division, has authorized a \$400,000 matching award program to assist eligible fire departments in the purchase of commercial turnout gear washer/extractor and/or a gear dryer.

Since 2015, the first year of the Turnout Gear washer/Extractor Program, the Department of Public Safety has awarded over \$1,100,000 to over 145 MN fire departments for the purchase of turnout gear washers/extractors and/or a gear dryer(s).

A good turnout gear decontamination program should also include equipment to quickly dry turnout gear after washing so that it can be more quickly played back into service. Turnout gear dryers can dry wet gear in 4 hours or less as opposed to the much longer "hang dry method". Wet turnout gear is difficult to don and can cause steam burns to the wearer. Also, if the decontamination process (washing/drying) can be accomplished more quickly and efficiently, firefighters will be more likely to regularly clean their gear thus leading to more healthy firefighters in the long-term.

Individual Grant Amounts:

Available funding will pay for individual grants of no more than \$10,000 for a gear washer/extractor and \$8,000 for a dryer. A local match of the grant award, as indicated in the chart below, is required. The required local match amount will be based on the population of the applicant's fire department coverage area. The type of equipment purchased will first need to meet the approval of the State Fire Marshal prior to funds being awarded. Fire departments will indicate whether they are applying to purchase a gear washer/extractor, a dryer, or both.

| Population | Required Match % |
|---------------|------------------|
| Up to 10,000 | 10% |
| 10,001-25,000 | 25% |
| 25,001-50,000 | 35% |
| Over 50,000 | 50% |

Eligible Applicants:

Only Minnesota fire departments that currently use the MNFIRS reporting system will be eligible to receive funds.

Any fire service agency applying for an award must include a letter from the jurisdiction indicating their intent to purchase a turnout gear washer/extractor/dryer(s). The letter must be from the governance entity (e.g. the city council, township board). A fire service agency is defined as having a fire department identification number (FDID) from the State Fire Marshal Division.

Awards will be made to the jurisdiction submitting the award application. The award contract must be signed by a representative of the lead jurisdiction having the legal authority to sign contracts for that jurisdiction. Legal authority may be documented by a resolution or official minutes from the jurisdiction and will be required at the time that the award contract is to be signed. It is not required for the grant application.

The Committee will consider the following factors and prioritize awards based on, but not limited to:

- Overall jurisdiction/fire department budget
- Number of firefighters
- Sets of turn out gear
- Population serviced
- Current inventory of turnout gear cleaning equipment
- Average annual number of fires

Jurisdictions of two or more, in close proximity, may submit joint applications.

Grant Process:

An evaluation committee will review and score the applications based on the above criteria and present a recommendation to the Commissioner of Public Safety who will make the final determination. Once a request has been awarded, a formal award agreement will be prepared and must be signed by the awardee organization and the Department of Public Safety. Once the signature process has been completed, the award is considered fully executed and becomes a legally binding agreement between the grantee organization and the Department of Public Safety.

Audit/Compliance:

The award funds are available on a cost reimbursement basis for FY20 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) where costs are reimbursed after they are incurred and paid by the grantee agencies. The grantee organization will be required to provide to the State Fire Marshal Division the written summary of all expenditures, including documentation on how the award and matching funds were spent.

Application Submission:

A complete application packet must be received by **4:00 pm CST Tuesday October 15, 2019**, preferably by email at nolan.pasell@state.mn.us or by mail:

State Fire Marshal Division
Attn: Nolan Pasell
445 Minnesota Street, Suite #145
St. Paul, MN 55101-5145

Applications not received by this deadline will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that their application is received by the deadline.

Any questions about the application process should be directed to Nolan Pasell at (651) 201-7218 or Nolan.pasell@state.mn.us.